

Remarks

The present application includes claims 1-21. Claims 1-21 have been rejected by the Examiner. By this Response, claims 1, 6, 10, 16, and 17 have been amended.

Claim Amendments

The Examiner notes that claims 6 and 16 previously used “or”, not “and” when referring to the buttons. By this Response, claims 6 and 16 have been amended to recite “and”. Thus, for at least this reason, the Applicant submits that claims 6 and 16 should be allowable over the cited art of record.

Claims 1, 10, and 17 have been amended to specify that the player is eligibility to play the one or more provided bonus features without an ante-bet for the at least one bonus feature. Furthermore, play of the base or underlying game and at least one bonus feature on the gaming machine is tailored for a player based on the single amount of the wager allowed at the gaming machine. In contrast to games allowing multiple wagers and multiple payline configurations, the presently claimed invention can be customized or tailored for a particular venue and/or type of player based on the one allowed bet, rather than a large range of bet profiles. Thus, for at least these reasons, the Applicant submits that claims 1, 10, and 17, as well as their dependent claims 2-9, 11-16, and 18-21, should be allowable over the cited art of record.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1-3, 5-6, 10-11, and 15-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kirk (GB 2,083,935) in view of Adams (US 2003/0114215). The Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejection for at least the following reasons.

Kirk relates to "fruit" gaming machines providing a "nudge" feature to move one or more symbols on to a combination line to complete a winning combination using a "quasi-rotary member." The player may be given the option at the end of a game, or even before or during a game, of operating at least one game-feature switch in order to provide the player with a second chance of obtaining a winning combination. This is referred to in Kirk as a "skip" feature.

However, contrary to the Examiner's assertion, the Kirk reference appears to contain neither a teaching nor a suggestion that a player playing the gaming machine of Kirk is constrained to wager a single amount on each play of the base game without choice of other wagering options. While Kirk provides a "skip" feature, it is also unclear whether such a skip feature qualifies as a bonus feature triggering event and a bonus feature for which the player is qualified by the single wager amount. Furthermore, as discussed by the Examiner, Kirk fails to disclose a non-square matrix of symbols with at least five pay lines defined across the reels. While Adams discloses a non-square matrix, Adams also fails to disclose the single wager amount and bonus feature recited in the pending claims. The presently pending claims recite not only that the player is constrained to a single wager option, but the single wager option is combined with a plurality of pay lines and a bonus game. Thus, for at least these reasons, the Applicant

respectfully submits that the pending claims should be allowable over the cited art of record.

Additionally, claims 1, 10, and 17 have been amended to specify that the player is eligibility to play the one or more provided bonus features without an ante-bet for the at least one bonus feature. Furthermore, the claims have been amended to recite that play of the base or underlying game and at least one bonus feature on the gaming machine is tailored for a player based on the single amount of the wager allowed at the gaming machine. These limitations are neither taught nor suggested by Kirk or Adams, either taken alone or in combination.

Even if one or more references are available that illustrate features such as a matrix of viewable gaming indicia and additional paylines that could be used without increasing the single coin wager required, there is no reason apparent from the cited references why a person of ordinary skill would incorporate these features with the other features specified in the claims. The mere fact that a feature is known in the art does not provide sufficient guidance to a person of ordinary skill to combine that feature with other features from other references. Otherwise, the law allowing for patentability of a combination of known features would be eviscerated.

There is no reason apparent from the cited references for a person of ordinary skill in the field to necessarily seek out one or more references disclosing a matrix of viewable gaming indicia and additional paylines that could be used without increasing the single coin wager required, and there is especially no reason apparent for a person of ordinary skill to adopt a non-square matrix of symbols with five or more pay-lines and include a

bonus game without also increasing the available wager options. In view of this, Applicant respectfully requests allowance of the presently pending claims over the cited art of record.

Claims 4, 7-9, 12-14, and 19-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kirk in view of Adams and further in view of Vancura (US 6,033,307). The Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejection for at least the following reasons.

As discussed above, a combination of Kirk and Adams fails to teach or reasonably suggest the combination of limitations recited in amended independent claims 1, 10, and 17, from which claims 4, 7-9, 12-14, and 19-21 depend, respectively. While Vancura may mention a bonus game with a progressive jackpot award, Vancura fails to cure the remaining deficiencies of the cited art with respect to independent claims 1, 10, and 17, from which claims 4, 12, and 19 depend. Furthermore, while Vancura may mention multiplier symbols found on a payline, Vancura fails to teach a series of free games and also fails to cure the remaining deficiencies of the cited art with respect to independent claims 1, 10, and 17, from which claims 7-9, 13-14, and 20-21 depend.

Thus, for at least these reasons, the Applicant respectfully submits that at least claims 4, 7-9, 12-14, and 19-21 should be allowable.

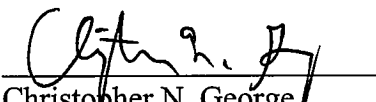
CONCLUSION

It is submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance and a Notice of Allowability is respectfully solicited. If the Examiner has any questions or the Applicant can be of any assistance, the Examiner is invited and encouraged to contact the Applicant at the number below.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees or credit overpayment to the Deposit Account of MHM, Account No. 13-0017.

Respectfully submitted,

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